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**The History of  
Reynard the Fox**

**London**

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Reynard the FOX.

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Printed and Sold in Alderman's Church-  
Yard, London.

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The HISTORY of  
REYNARD the FOX.

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C H A P. I.

A great Feast proclaimed by the Lion, at which the Wolf, his Wife, and the Hound complain against Reynard the Fox.



**I**T was when the woods were cloathed with green attire, and the meadows adorned with fragrant flowers; when birds chanted forth their harmonious songs, the Lion made a great feast at his

Palace of Sanden; and issued a proclamation for all the beasts and birds to come thereto without delay, on pain of his contempt.

Now being assembled before the king, there were some beasts found there that made great complaints against the Fox, (who was absent) particularly Megrim the Wolf, who first began:

"Dread Sovereign, I beseech thee take pity on me and my wife, for the injuries we have sustained by that false creature Reynard the Fox, who came into my house by violence, and bepest my children in such a rank manner that they became instantly blind; for which I expect from him amends, and from your Majesty Justice."

When the Wolf had ended, up starts Curtis the Hound, and complaining against Reynard, said, That in the cold season of the winter, when he was kept from all manner of prey, and half starved, having but one pudding left, the Fox had taken it from him.

Tibert the Cat, upon this got up, and falling before the King, said, My Lord I must confess that Reynard the Fox is

much complained against, yet each of these will find enough for his clearing, for concerning the offence against the Hound, it was committed long since; the pudding was mine, though I complained not, for I got it out of the mill by night when the miller lay asleep.

Here the Panther interrupted the Cat, saying, It was just and good to complain against Reynard, for all the world knows he is a thief, murderer, and ravisher; and false to every creature. I will tell you what I saw him do yesterday to Kayward the Hare, who is now standing in the King's presence. He promised him to teach him to sing Credo, and make him a good chaplain; but ~~had~~ I not come by he had killed him, for he had got poor Kayward between his legs, and was squeezing his throat; therefore, O! my Lord, if you suffer him to go unpunished that hath broken the peace, your own children hereafter will bear the shadow of this evil. — Certainly, Panther, said Issegim, what you say is true.

**CHAP.**



## C H A P. II.

Grimbard the Brock's Speech in Behalf  
of Reynard.

**G**Rimbard the Brock, who was Reynard's sister's son, being moved with anger, said, Ilegim, you are malicious, and as the proverb is, Malice never speaks well of any one. I wish you would agree that he who hath done the most injury of either my cousin Reynard or you, should die the death; was he here at court, and in favour as you are, he would make you ask forgiveness, for have you not bitten and torn him with your venomous teeth? have you forgot how you cheated him of his Plaice, of which you left him nothing but the bones; also the slice of bacon: the taste of which was so good, that you eat it up from him alone, though he got it at the danger of his own life; I must confess my kinsman lay with his wife, but it was seven years before Ilegim married her; so what credit gets he by slandering his wife, when she is troubled at it.

Now comes Kayward the Hare with his complaint, which is but a trifle; for if he would not learn his lesson, can you blame his schoolmaster Reynard for giving him due correction; and lastly, for Curuse, he would not steal the pudding himself? and who could blame Reynard for taking away stolen goods from a thief? my uncle is a gentleman, a true man, and cannot endure falsehood; he does nothing but by the council of a priest; and since the King hath made peace, he hath hurt nobody; he eats but once a day, he chastiseth his body, wears a shirt, and hath eat no meat for this year past; he hath forsaken his castle; a poor hermitage retains him; he hath distributed all his wealth and lives upon alms, and doth infinite penance for his sins.

## C H A P. III.

The Cock's Complaint against Reynard,  
and the King's Answer.

**T**HUS while Grimbard stood preaching was brought upon a bier by Canticleer the Cock, a dead Hen, whose head Reynard had bitten off: On each side stood two sorrowful Hens, sisters to the deceased, each bearing a burning torch, and crying out, A-lack and-a-well-a-day for the loss of our sister Copple: And being come before the King, they kneeled down and said,

“ Most mighty King,

“ Vouchsafe to redress the great injuries that Reynard the Fox hath done me and my children, now weeping before you.—In April last, in fair weather, and in the midst of my pride, having seven daughters, was envied by Reynard, who made many attempts to get at us by scaling the wall, but was repulsed, and had his skin torn by the dogs; but at last he came like a hermit, with a letter to read, signed with your Majesty's seal, in which I found you had made peace through all

your whole realm, and that no beast nor fowl should hurt one another; and as for him he was become a Monk, did penance for his sins, shewed me his books and beads, the hair shirt next his skin, and vowed to eat no more flesh; and saying his Credo, laid himself down under a bench. I was glad to hear this, and took no heed, but clucked my children together; but false Reynard crept between us and the gate, seized on, bore away, and destroyed fifteen of them; and yesterday Copple my daughter, now on the bier, was rescued from him by a kennel of Hounds: so for all this I beg of your Majesty Justice."

The King then turning to Grimbard, said, Your uncle hath prayed and fasted well, hath he not? I vow he shall suffer for this.—Mr. Canticleer, I have heard your complaint, and will grant your request; give your daughter burial, and I will consult with my Lords to give you right against the murderer.—This the King immediately did, and it was agreed to send Bruin the Bear to summon Reynard to appear before the King to answer to the heavy crimes laid to his charge.

## C H A P. IV.

Bruin the Bear unfortunate in his Message  
to Reynard the Fox.

**T**HE next morning went Bruin to Malepardus, a high mountain where Reynard had a castle, and knocked at the gate, he cried aloud, Sir Reynard, are you at home? I am Bruin your kinsman, come to summons you to court, to answer to several complaints laid against you ; and if you appear not to your summons, the King vows you shall answer it with your life.—Reynard hearing this, ran into one of his holes, where he plotted how he might bring the bearer to disgrace, whom he knew loved him not. At last he came out of his hole, saying, Dear uncle, you are welcome, I was busy when you spoke in saying my evening's devotion. I am sorry you have taken this long journey, as I intended to have been at court to-morrow ; indeed I wish we were there now, since I have left off eating meat, my body is swelled and distempered with eating of so many honeycombs through wantonness, that I fear its consequences. How !

quoth Bruin, do you make so light of  
 honey-combs, which is meat for the Em-  
 peror? Nephew help me to some, and I  
 will be your friend for ever. Quoth the  
 Fox, well, I will bring you to a place  
 where you shall have as much of it as you  
 can eat; at this the Bear laughed till he  
 could hardly stand. Well thought Rey-  
 nard, you soon will laugh on the other  
 side of the mouth. So he brought him to  
 a carpenter's yard, wherein stood a great  
 oak tree with two great wedges in it, and  
 the cleft open. Dear uncle, said the Fox,  
 be careful, for within this tree is much  
 honey; pray eat moderate, for a surfeit  
 is dangerous.—Never fear you that, said  
 Bruin: so he entered the tree with eager-  
 ness, and thrust his head into the cleft  
 quite over his ears; which the Fox per-  
 ceiving, pulled out the wedges, and the  
 Bear was locked in fast, and roared out  
 hideously; while the Fox at a distance  
 said, Is the honey good, uncle? do you  
 like it? pray do not surfeit yourself with  
 it; then left him and went to his castle.  
 The Bear's noise brought out the carpen-  
 ter and his neighbours with great sticks  
 and staves; and the Bear seeing so many

enemies, at last wrenched his head out of the tree, leaving behind him his skin and ears; upon this the people fell on him, and beat him most woefully; however he at last got from them, bitterly cursing the Fox who had brought him to this misery.—In great pain and grief he at length arrived at the King's Court, where he cried out, Behold, dread sovereign, for doing your royal will and pleasure I am come to this disgrace. Then said the King, How durst he do this? I swear by my crown I will take such revenge as shall make him tremble.

Upon this was summoned another council when it was agreed to send Tibert the Cat.

## C H A P. V.

Tibert the Cat's Embassy to Reynard,  
with the bad Success of it.



**T**IBERT was loath to go on this message, but at length fearing the king's displeasure, undertook it; and arriving at Malepardus he found the Fox standing at his castle gate, to whom he thus addressed himself, Health to my cousin Reynard, the King by me summonses you to the court, on sure pain of death for the refusal. Welcome cousin, I obey the command, and wish my sovereign all happiness; only let me desire you to stay



all night, and early in the morning I will go with you.—I am content to stay, says Tibert, you speak like a gentleman. — Truly, says the Fox, I have but one honey-comb left, what think you of it for supper?—I had rather have a mouse, replied Tibert. A mouse, dear cousin, here is a parson hard by hath a barn full of mice. Dear Reynard lead me thither, and I will be your friend for ever. Now the Fox had the night before got into the parson's barn and stole a fat Hen, which so enraged the priest, that he set a snare to catch him, of which the Fox being apprised had escaped: To this hole brings he the Cat, saying, Go in here, and you will soon get your belly full, I will wait for you till you come out. But may I go in safely, said the Cat, for the priests are very subtle. Cousin, said the Fox, I never knew you a coward before. Puss being ashamed at this reproof, sprung in, and was quickly caught by the neck; which as soon as the Cat felt, he leaped back again, so that the snare closed faster, and had like to have strangled him, so that he exclaimed bitterly against Reynard, who scornfully said, Tibert, dost thou

love mice ? but the Cat mewed sadly. — The priest rising out of his bed, called up his servant, saying, We have caught the Fox that stole our Hen; and coming to Tibert, smote him with a great staff, and struck out one of his eyes. The Cat thinking his death near, leaped between the priest's legs, and fastened on his genitals, which when his wife saw, she swore she would rather lose the whole offering of seven years, then her husband's concerns. This threw the priest in a swoon, so they all left the Cat, and the Fox returned to his castle, thinking Tibert past recovery; but he seeing his foes busy about the priest, gnawed the cord a under, and made his escape out of the hole, going roaring to court with the loss of one eye, and a bruised body; so that when the King beheld him he was angry, and called a council once more how to be revenged on the Fox.

## C H A P. VII.

The Brock's Embassy to Reynard the Fox's Confession, and their Arrival at Court.

**T**HEN, said the King, Go you, Sir Gimbard, but take heed, for Reynard is very subtle. Brock thanked his Majesty, and taking his leave, went to Malepardus, and found Reynard and his wife sporting with their young ones. — Having saluted them, he said, Take heed uncle that absence from the court doth not do you more harm than you think for; the complaints against you are many and great; this is the third summons, and if you delay coming, you and your's will find no mercy, for in three days your castle will be demolished, all your kindred made slaves, and you a public example, unless you can make your innocence appear; and the which I doubt not you have discretion to do. Very true, nephew replied Reynard, I will go with you, not only to clear myself, but to the shame of my enemies; many of which I have at

court ; so taking leave of his family he and Grimbard set out for Sandem the King's palace. — On their way Reynard made the following confession unto his nephew Grimbard : Blame me, not dear cousin, if my life be full of care : for I strive to blot out my sins by repentance, that my soul may be at quiet : I have grievously offended against Canticleer the Cock and his children ; my uncle Bruin the Bear, and Tibert the Cat ; nay, I have abused and slandered the King and Queen, I have betrayed Isgrim the Wolf by calling him uncle, when he is no kin to me ; I made him bind his foot to the bell-rope to teach him to ring, but the peal had like to have cost him his life ; I taught him to catch fish, by which he was sorely banged ; I led him to the parson's house to steal bacon ; I stole a fine fat hen fat before the priest for his dinner, in doing which he espied and pursued me, when I was obliged to let the Hen go, and creep into a hole ; but the priest espying Isgrim, cried this is he, strike ! strike ! so my enemies fell upon the Wolf, and almost killed him. — But for all this I ask forgiveness.

Here on their way they met a Pullen, at which the Fox glanced his eye (for the ill that was bred in the bone stuck) which Brock taking notice of, said, Fie, dissembling cousin, why wander your eyes after the Pullen? You wrong me nephew, said the Fox, my eyes wandered not, I was just saying a Pater-Noster for the souls of the Pullin I have formerly slain, in which devotion you hindered me.

By this time they were come to the palace, and Reynard quaked for fear, on account of the many and great crimes he had to answer for.



## C H A P. XII.

Reynard's Excuse before the King, his  
Trial and Condemnation.

**A**T the news of Reynard's arrival all sorts of people from the highest to the lowest prepared themselves to go and accuse him. Though Reynard's heart trembled, yet he kept his countenance, and went as proudly and unconcerned through the streets, as though he was the King's son, and entirely innocent of any offence. When he came before the King, he said, Heaven preserve your Majesty, there never came before you a more loyal subject than myself, and so will die; I know there are several in your court that seek my life; but I am persuaded your Majesty hates slanderers. — Peace, traitorous Reynard, replied the King, thinkest thou to deceive me also. Know, that the peace which I commanded you have broken; therefore, thou Devil among the Good, with what face can you pretend to love me; when all

these before me can testify against thee ?

— Said the Fox, my Liege, if Bruin's crown be bloody with stealing honey, and Tibert loses her eye by getting into the priest's barn to steal mice ; when they should have been diligent in your Majesty's embassy, can I help that ? O, my dread Sovereign I am as innocent as the child unborn ; however, use me as you please.

Upon this Bruin the Bear, Bellin the Ram, Kayward the Hare, Isgrim the Wolf, Bruel the Goose, Boulden the Ass, Borell the Bull, and Canticleer the Cock, with their children, all with one voice cried out against the Fox ; all which caused the King to order his trial to be immediately brought on.

A parliament was summoned, and after a long trial, in the course of which the Fox answered every thing with much craft, he was condemned ; whereupon Gimbarb, and the rest of his kindred left the court, as not enduring to see him executed. The King seeing so many depart, said, Though Reynard had some faults, yet he had many friends. — This musing of the King made the Cat, the Bear, and the Wolf jealous, lest the King



should retract Reynard's sentence, and was angry at the delay of his execution; to forward which Tibert produced the cord in] which he was hanged in the Priest's house, and they put it round Reynard's neck, who said, I do not fear death; I saw my father die, and he soon vanished; death is familiar to me; but I beseech your Majesties (who were both seated to see the execution) to grant me but one request before I die; that is, that I may unload my conscience, and beg the assistance of your prayers, that I may be happy hereafter.





## C H A P. IX.

## Reynard's Confession and Pardon.

**N**OW every one began to pity Reynard, and prevailed on the King to grant his request ; which being done, he thus began :—Help me ye powers above, for I can see none but whom I have offended ; in my youth I used to be much with the lambs, delighting in their bleating, until at last biting one of them, I tasted the sweetness of their blood, and could not forbear ever since. This drew me into the woods amongst the Goats, where I slew and eat some young Kids ; this made me more hardy, so I fell to killing Hens, Geese, and other Pullen ; for all was fish that come to net. Afterwards I fell into bad company, as Issegim, who pretended to be my kinsman, we grew at last so intimate, that he stole the great things, and I the small ; he murdered the Nobles, and I the meaner Subjects ; I speak this plainly, he had plate and jewels more than ten carts could carry.—Ah ! said the King, where is all this treasure ?

—It was stolen, my Liege, said the Fox but had it not been stolen as it was, it might have cost your Majesty's life — Discover the matter then, Reynard, said the Queen. I am willing to discharge my conscience before I die; it is true the King was to have been killed by his own subjects, I must confess by some of mine nearest kindred; it was thus, My father digging in the ground found the King's treasure, whereupon he was so proud that he scorned the rest of the Beast of the Wilderness; at last he caused Tibert the Cat to go to Bruin the Bear, in the forest of Arden, do him homage, and promised to set the crown upon Bruin's head; then he sent for his wife Issegrip the Wolf, and Tibert the Cat, amongst whom it was agreed to murder your Majesty, and make Bruin King; but it happened that my nephew Grimbard, being got drunk, discovered it to Slaggard his wife, who as a great secret told my wife, and she discovered it to me. It grieved me to think a ravenous Bear should depose you; but being desirous to find out this treasure which my father hid, I at last by constant watching did, and I and

my wife removed. The plot being thus carried on with secrecy, when my father went to the cave and found his treasure all taken away, he for madness hanged himself. All this is true, I am now ready to die, my conscience being eased.

The King and Queen hearing this hoping to get from Reynard his treasure, released him from the gibbet, desiring him to discover where it lay. Rather you than my enemies, said the Fox. — Fear not, Reynard, said the Queen, the King shall spare thy life. Madam, replied the King, will you believe the Fox? know you not his quality to lie and steal? — In these circumstances, my Lord, you may believe him. Well, Madam, for this time I will be ruled by you, and pardon him all his offences, with this promise, That if ever he offends again, he and all his posterity shall be destroyed.

## C H A P. X.

Reynard restored to Favor, and preferred

**T**HEN said the King, Reynard, you shall do us homage ; and for your discoveries I will make you one of the Lords of my council ; discharge your trust, and govern by truth and equity ; henceforth I will be ruled by your wisdom, and under me you shall be chief governor.

Reynard's friends thanked the King, and returned with the Fox, who was glad he had sped so well, having caused Bruin and Tibert to be destroyed, who sought his life.

Arriving at Malepardus there was great feasting and rejoicing at the Fox's good fortune ; after which Reynard thanked them for the love and honor done him, protesting to be their friend and servant for ever ; and so shaking hands they departed.

**F I N I S.**

*april 1896 - o/n*